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NEW YORK MAN SENTENCED FOR PASSPORT FRAUD

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced that ARTHUR POWELL, 45, of 224th Street, Queens, NY, was sentenced today to two years probation for committing passport fraud. POWELL pled guilty in September of 2004 to one charge of making false statements to obtain a passport, in U.S. District Court in Concord.

In February, 2002, POWELL, a Jamaican citizen, submitted a passport application in which he claimed that he was born in Albany, New York. POWELL was indicted in U.S. District Court in May of 2003, after agents of the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service uncovered the fraud at the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. POWELL pleaded guilty to willfully and knowingly making material false statements to the State Department in a passport application in order to fraudulently obtain a United States passport.

U. S. Attorney Colantuono commended the U. S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service for what he termed the "exceptionally diligent and efficient" handling of the investigation.

This case resulted from an ongoing initiative known as "Operation Checkmate" which is designed to identify false passport applications that are submitted for adjudication to the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The National Passport Center processes and adjudicates approximately two million applications each year, or one quarter of all United States passport applications. Operation Checkmate is a joint initiative of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Hampshire, the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General and the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

POWELL was sentenced by U.S. District Chief Judge Steven J. McAuliffe. Assistant U. S. Attorney Alfred Rubega prosecuted this case.